

## House Republican Press Release

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### **Rep. Piscopo Introduces Legislation to Make English Official State Language**



The ability to speak and write English is the one essential skill everyone must master to succeed in Connecticut and for that reason, state Representative John E. Piscopo, R-76<sup>th</sup> District, has introduced legislation (House Bill 5024) that would make it the official state language.

“Over the past hundred years, English has become the language of business and diplomacy – and it is the language most people from different countries speak when they need to communicate with each other and be understood. It is a modern language that is constantly evolving to meet the needs of new generations and to explain and describe new technologies and scientific discoveries,” Representative Piscopo said.

“Although the population of the United States is composed of people from literally hundreds of racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds, the glue that always has kept us together has been the fact that we speak a common language – and that language is English,” Representative Piscopo said. “In addition to enabling us to communicate easily with one another, it has enabled us to create a culture and a system of shared values that has made us the strongest and most prosperous country the world has ever seen.”

“For centuries, the highest priority for every new immigrant has been to learn the English language and speak it fluently,” Representative Piscopo said. “Immigrants have always come here seeking the opportunity to create better lives for themselves and their families. By and large, they have succeeded and one of the main reasons they were able to do so has been their determination to become fluent in English.”

“Sadly, the commitment to learn English has not been as strong among some recent immigrants as it has been in the past,” Rep. Piscopo said. “Part of the problem has been the tendency to place immigrant children in bi-lingual education rather than English-immersion classes. While originally established with the best of intentions, bi-lingual education has not fulfilled its promise to give children a working knowledge of English. Instead, by instructing them in the language of their parents’ countries, it has prevented them from gaining a firm grasp of English at an early age – when they are most capable of learning a new language.”

“A common language helps foster a sense of community and citizenship. It brings people

together and helps immigrants become full participants in the life and culture of their new hometowns. In contrast, failing to learn English marginalizes and keeps immigrants apart from their fellow citizens and encourages them to live in segregated language ghettos,” Rep. Piscopo said

“Understanding English and speaking and writing it well is the one skill both immigrants and native-born Americans need to master to qualify for the most challenging and rewarding jobs available here. If English becomes the official state language, it will open the door of opportunity for all immigrants and help them achieve their American Dreams,” Rep. Piscopo said.